Poaching racket in PANNA TIGER RESERVE

318. SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a Wildlife Crime Control Bureau has exposed a poaching racket in Panna Tiger Reserve;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) what steps have been taken by Government in this regard; and

(d) the details of the security arrangements made by Government to preserve tigers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH) : (a) No Sir.

(b) and (c) The questions do not arise.

(d) The milestone initiatives taken by the Government of India for protection of tigers and other wild animals are given in the STATEMENT [Refer to the Statement-III appended to the answer to USQ No. 315 PART (f)]

Mining permission in Elephant RESERVE area in Orissa

319. SHRI PENUMALLI MADHU:
SHRI M.V. MYSURA REDDY:
Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government has issued licence to Vedanta to mine bauxite reserves in Niyamgiri hills in Kalahandi district of Orissa;

(b) whether it is not a violation of Section 18 of the Indian Wildlife Act, as this area has been declared as Elephant Reserve in 2004 and there is also a great danger to the eco system once mining starts;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the tribal are vociferously opposing mining in this area; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the reasons behind his Ministry giving permission for mining in a wildlife protected area and how State and Central Governments are planning to address the concerns of the tribals?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH) : (a) About 660.74 ha. of forest land for mining of bauxite ore in Niyamgiri Hills of Lanjigarh, Kalahandi district of Orissa has been approved for diversion subject to certain stipulations in favour of Orissa Mining Corporation Ltd. (OMCL) under the provisions of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. However, the forest land will be handed over to the project proponent only after receipt of compliance of stipulations.

(b) The project falls neither in a declared elephant reserve nor it is a part of any Wildlife Sanctuary. Hence any violation of Section 18 has not taken place. The danger to the eco-system has been appraised while processing the environmental and the forest clearance. The proposal was examined by the Wildlife Institute of India. They examined the Wildlife Management Plan prepared by the State Government of Orissa and offered suggestions for its improvement and proper implementation. The Central Mine Planning and Design Institute (CMPDI) studied the ground water discharge and natural flow in the streams and soil erosion. The CMPDI is of the view that the proposed mining activity may have negligible impact on the lower acquifer system. The natural water sources/streams will maintain their flow and will be benefitted in the said area. Further, improvement in the ground water table after mining operations is anticipated. The Forest Advisory Committee recommended the proposal stipulating certain specific conditions like concurrent reclamation, minimum tree felling in phased manner and modified Management Plan. Thus, appropriate measures to mitigate adverse impact of mining on the eco-system have been prescribed to be implemented at the project cost.

(c) and (d) Mining of bauxite ore is a site specific activity being done in bauxite rich areas of Niyamgiri Hills in Orissa. The proposal for diversion of forest land for this purpose was received from the State Government of Orissa. The proposal was examined through the Forest Advisory Committee (FAC) constituted under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. The proposal was also examined by the Supreme Court of India and its Committee known as the Central Empowered Committee. The concerns of the local population including tribals have been duly considered while according approvals. The Rehabilitation Package suggested by the Supreme Court in their order dated 23.11.2007 has been accepted by the SIIL, OMCL and State Government of Orissa. The following measures have been stipulated to undertake activities for the welfare of local people including tribals:

(1) Though there is no displacement of the local tribals, the specific measures have been proposed to address the concerns of the local tribal population.

(2) The State Government has also been requested to protect the forest rights of the people under the Scheduled Tribes and other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 before transfer of the forest land for mining purposes.

(3) The Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) has been created by the State of Orissa with stake-holders like State of Orissa, Orissa Mining Corporation Ltd. and M/s Sterlite Industries (India) Limited (SIIL) to ensure implementation of proper schemes for the development of the tribal. It has been decided that M/s Sterlite Industries (India) Limited (SIIL) will deposit every year commencing from 1.4.07, 5% of its annual profits before tax and interest from Lanjigarh Project or Rs. 10 crores whichever is higher for Scheduled Area Development with the said SPV.

(4) In addition to this, M/s SIIL is also required to contribute Rs. 12.20 crores towards tribal development.

(5) M/s SIIL has also to pay Net Present Value of Rs. 55 crores.

(6) M/s SIIL has also to pay Rs. 50.53 crores towards Wildlife Management Plan for Conservation and Management of Wildlife around Lanjigarh bauxite mine.

Paints with higher contents of lead

†320.SHRI PRABHAT JHA :
SHRI BALAVANT *ALIAS* BAL APTE :
Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that most of the paints sold in country have higher contents of lead than the ones stipulated by the Bureau of Indian Standards;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reason therefor; and

(c) if answer to the part (a) above be in the negative Governmentus reaction to the research report by the Centre for Science and Environment on this aspect?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH) : (a) and (b) The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) has stipulated the Lead contents in paints which are in the nature of product specification and its compliance is voluntary. The labelling under the Eco-mark scheme for various categories of products including paints is not mandatory and is also managed by BIS. The BIS or the Central Pollution Control Board have not undertaken any study to measure Lead contents in paints. Traditionally lead compounds have been used in paints as pigments for getting a particular colour. Of late, some companies have initiated the use of alternate pigments to reduce Lead content in paints.

(c) The report of the Centre for Science and Environment lays emphasis on awareness generation apart from other measures. Awareness creation on environmental issues and eco-labelling is regularly undertaken by various Central and State agencies and non-government organizations (NGOs). BIS has undertaken the task of review of all Indian Standards on paints with respect to Lead content.

Environmental Development Works in West Bengal

†321.SHRI SAMAN PATHAK: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of proposals under his Ministryus consideration for environmental development works in West Bengal; and

(b) the details of the plan approved by his Ministry during last two years particularly for North Bengal, Darjeeling, Duars and Jalpaiguri?

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† Orignial notice of the question was received in Hindi.